ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURES ON TOURISM COMPANIES: SIMULATION OF SCENARIOS IN GOLF COURSE OPERATORS

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ABSTRACT

Andalusia (Spain) has become one of the world's leading regions for receiving golf tourists. In recent years there has been a constant increase in the number of golf courses; as a result an institutional context is developing in respect of environment protection that is conditioning the behaviour of companies operating sports/tourism facilities of this type. In the present study we analyse this organizational context from the perspective of the Institutional Theory; we propose possible future scenarios by simulating the evolution of the normative pressures in respect of environmental protection. For this we have applied the statistical technique of Partial Least Squares.

The simulation by means of the ceteris paribus criterion has demonstrated for us that an increase of the normative pressures would not substantially modify the results of our original model. We believe that the relatively weak influence of this type of pressure may be because the wide social debate generated in that Spanish region on the sustainability of sports facilities of this type, has propitiated a substantial body of legislation that has conditioned the environmental behaviour of golf courses. Therefore, the best way to obtain legitimacy and social acceptance is still by complying with the law.

Keywords: Institutional Theory, Environmental Practices, Golf Tourism, Partial Least Squares

JEL Classification: L83, O13, R11

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades in Spain, a tourism product/market has been developed that is having enormous social and economic repercussions. We are referring to golf tourism, a specialist sub-sector in which Andalusia has been the Spanish region attracting the largest number of golf tourists. The regional government (Enterprise for the Management of Tourism and Sport in Andalusia, 2011) reports that, in the year 2011, Andalusia received 425,000 golf tourists, which represented a 0.5% increase over the previous year. The income produced by them signifies approximately half of the total amount generated by this sub-sector in Spain as a whole. In addition, this segment represents 1.9% of the total activity of the regional tourism sector. These visitors were principally British and German golf enthusiasts – players, spectators, family members and friends; the average stay was 13.9 days; and the average daily expenditure per tourist was 80.35 Euros, 20 Euros more than that of a conventional tourist.

Golf tourism can be defined in similar terms to those proposed by Tous and Borrero (2003: 3), who understand it as "a social phenomenon that, motivated by the practice of

a sport and whose object is actually to play some golf, causes a series of displacements and movements of those interested, giving rise to significant economic activity associated with it. In golf tourists, a series of diverse factors come together, whose characteristics include sporting activity, competitions, tourism, economics and social behaviour, since in one form or another, this interest determines and configures not only the profile of the golf tourist/player, but also aspects that involve, to a great extent, their life style".

However, there is an open debate in society on the environmental impact of this type of installation. This debate has led to a series of measures being taken, in most the cases imposed by legal regulation, aimed at reducing the negative effects that golf courses can have on the natural environment. In this line, studies such as those of Delmas and Toffel (2004), Buysse and Verbeke (2003), Dagapusta *et al*., (2000), and Henriques and Sadorsky (1996) demonstrate the importance of legal regulation as a conditioner of the environmental behaviour of organisations. Particularly in the organizational field of golf course operators, studies such as those of Paniza (2003) and Vargas and Riquel (2013) reach similar conclusions on the capacity of laws to influence the adoption and implementation of environmental practices in golf courses, specifically, in the region of Andalusia (Spain).

However there are other authors who argue that the environmental behaviour of organizations is principally conditioned by what are termed "normative pressures", which have their origin not in government, through laws, but in the professionalization of the sector and its professional associations, through convention and custom (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995). Notable among these are Palmer *et al*. (1993); Florida and Davison (2001); Raines (2002); King and Lenox (2000); Heugens and Lander (2009); Zsidin (2005); and Jhon *et al. (*2001). Nevertheless, in the field of the golf courses, we have not found any previous studies based on the framework of the Institutional Theory that reach conclusions similar to those of the authors cited above.

All in all, it is logical to think that, as a sector consolidates management practices and routines, the normative pressures defined by the Institutional Theory should show increasing capacity to influence the behaviour of the organizations that form part of that sector. Golf tourism in Andalusia is a sector in expansion but its development is fairly recent; because of this, we consider that it provides us with a suitable organizational field in which to put forward future scenarios in relation to the normative pressures, by means of simulations. This is the principal objective pursued with this study: to analyse, by means of different scenarios for the evolution of normative pressures, the capacity of environmental response of the golf courses of Andalusia, and in continuation, how this influences the perception of social legitimacy and organizational performance.

Therefore, in the present work we apply an experimental analysis based on resorting to ceteris paribus, by means of which we aim to isolate the influence of the so-called normative pressures, as defined in the Institutional Theory, in the implementation of good environmental practices by the golf courses. In this approach, while holding the other pressures constant, we submit to two different scenarios the normative pressures of environmental character defined in the research model, postulating increases, the first slight and the second major, in the Likert scale scores of the various different normative indicators. By this means we are able to compare the real starting situation with the two simulated scenarios, taking as our basis for this the Partial Least Squares (PLS) statistical methodology.

The present study has therefore been divided into several parts. The first is devoted to a general introduction of the problem to be investigated; in the second we outline the theoretical framework applied in the research and which has given rise to a series of hypotheses; in the third the research model is specified; the fourth part introduces the methodology used and presents the sample employed; the fifth comprises the statistical analysis of the scenarios simulated; and in the sixth and last, we state the principal conclusions, giving special

attention to the implications for the management of companies operating in the tourism sector.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

Tourism is one economic activity among many, in which rules and principles are established to regulate the combination of resources available to companies for pursuing their profit-making commercial activities (Santana, 2010). These regulations, which condition the behaviour of the companies that together comprise the tourism offer of a particular region, tend to be imposed mainly by government, at the various applicable levels, but also by the rest of the interest groups that form the business context of these companies.

The companies that operate in tourist markets are, therefore, organisations suitable for study under the approach of the Institutional Theory. Zucker (1987) defines the institutional context as normative worlds constructed socially, in which organizations exist. Meyer and Rowan (1997) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) define this context or institutional environment as those requirements to which organizations must submit themselves if they wish to receive legitimacy and support, adding that the origin of these requirements can be found in what are known as pressure mechanisms that are exerted by the State, by professional and academic associations, and by generally-accepted belief systems. Scott (1995), another of the principal theoretical institutionalists, classifies these pressure mechanisms into three main types - coercive, normative and mimetic. In the last decade there have been many articles published in which the relationship between institutional pressures and companies' business decisions has been studied. In this respect, notable studies are those of Rodrigues and Child (2003), Fligstein (2001), Bercket (1999), and Oliver (1991); in all of these the capacity of the pressure mechanisms proposed under the Institutional Theory to influence the behaviour of companies is confirmed. In the next part, we analyse each of the pressures that comprise the institutional context of the golf courses of Andalusia with respect to environmental protection.

2.1.The Regulatory System

In the studies of authors such as Buysse and Verbeke (2003), Dagapusta *et al*. (2000), and Henriques and Sadorsky (1996), it is proven how the legislative capacity of governments influences the behaviour of companies. In particular, Delmas and Toffel (2004) argue that it is the environmental legislation that has the greatest capacity to modify corporate operations. In this line, Porter and Van der Linde (1995) confirm that environmental legislation affects the competitive position of the company. Shaffer (1995) even considers that these laws have a direct influence on the financial performance, in particular, and on the business performance in general of companies (Ann *et al*., 2006; García and Armas, 2007; Piñero *et al*., 2009).

This legislation has become yet more evident in the case of the golf courses of Andalusia, a sector intimately involved with the tourism industry and for which diverse public initiatives have been taken, aimed at ensuring the sustainability of the sector. For instance, in Andalusia the Decree 43/2008 established a raft of regulations with the force of law, of obligatory compliance, for the start-up and operation of golf courses, with strict environmental conditions (this Decree was partially modified by the Decree 309/2010 of 15 June).

Based on the above, we are in a position to formulate the following research hypothesis:

H1a: Coercive pressure produced by the laws and other regulations applicable to the activities carried out have a positive influence on the adoption of sustainable environmental practices.

2.2. The Normative System

This system generates normative pressures that influence organizational behaviour, by indicating to companies those behaviours and practices considered appropriate, legitimate and desirable within the sector (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Heugens and Landers, 2009; Scott, 1995). These pressures arise in consequence of the professionalization of the companies and their managers, the homologation of the relevant education and training in universities and business schools, and the strengthening of networked activities through the professional associations of reference in the sector. For Jhon *et al.* (2001) and Zsdisin *et al.* (2005), the ultimate goal of this type of pressure is the maintenance and improvement of social legitimacy for the company.

Considering specifically environmental matters, there are many studies that point to these mechanisms as the principal conditioning factor of the environmental behaviour of the companies in a particular activity sector (Palmer *et al.*, 1993; Henriques and Sardosky, 1996; King and Lenox, 2000; Florida and Davison, 2001; Raines, 2002). For companies of the tourism sector, however, there have been few empirical studies that have dealt with environmental pressure mechanisms of this type from the perspective of the Institutional Theory. In the particular case of the golf sector in Andalusia (Spain), in the study of Riquel (2011) and in the VIIIth International Workshop on Golf and the Environment held in Marbella (Andalusia) in October 2011, the following norms or standards were identified as the most accepted by the sector in relation to the environmental management of this type of tourism and sports facility: the EMAS Regulations, ISO Standard 14001, Audubon Certification, GEO Certification and UNE Standard 188001 (Q).

Based on the foregoing arguments, the following research hypothesis associated with normative pressures is put forward:

H1b: The acceptance of values and standards that originate from the applicable normative pressures have a positive influence on the adoption of sustainable environmental practices.

2.3. The Cognitive System

In any particular organizational field, as uncertainty grows, mimetic pressures exert more and more influence on the behaviour of the organizations comprising that sector (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 1995; Pasmar and Valle, 2011). This line is also taken in the study of Kimberly (1980), in which the author states that the managers of companies actively seek models to imitate. For Teo *et al.* (2003) this type of mechanism becomes evident in two ways: firstly by the prevalence of a particular practice, technology or process in a sector; and secondly by the perception of success achieved by the organization that adopts that practice or process, which acts to reduce the uncertainty (Haveman, 1993; Grewal and Dharwadkar, 2002; Pasmar and Valle, 2011). Bansal and Clelland (2004) state that, in the context of environmental protection, the uncertainty is even greater due to differences in the objectives pursued by the various pressure groups. Because of this the mimetic mechanisms of pressure may be predominant when a company is taking decisions on its environmental policy.

In the case of the golf courses, there is no doubt that interest in environmental management has been growing in recent years. Certain golf course operators in Andalusia have been identified as pioneers in practices of this type, which have been becoming more consolidated in this organizational field (VIIIth Workshop on Golf and the Environment, October 2011). These "model" courses include: Dunas de Doñana (Matalascañas, Huelva), which has been classified as the first ecological golf course in the whole of Spain; Valderrama golf course (San Roque, Cadiz), which is noted for its efforts in preserving autochthonous

flora and fauna; and the recently-opened golf course of Castellar de la Frontera (Cadiz), which has been classified by the Junta de Andalucía (Regional Government) as being of particular tourist interest for its environmental commitment.

The following table summarizes the various pressure mechanisms proposed by the Institutional Theory:

Table 1: Differences of emphasis of the three institutional pillars

INSTITUTIONAL ELEMENTS	REGULATORY	NORMATIVE	COGNITIVE
BASIS OF COMMITMENT	Convenience	Social obligation	What is accepted
MECHANISMS	Coercive	Normative (norms and values)	Mimetic
LOGIC	Instrumental	Appropriation	Orthodoxy
INDICATORS	Rules, laws, sanctions	Accreditation	General, isomorphism
BASIS OF LEGITIMACY	Legal sanction	Moral government	What is conceptually correct

Source: Scott, 1995.

2.4. Environmental Responsibility: Legitimacy and Organizational Performance

There is an ample academic literature confirming the influence of the Institutional Theory on the strategies and structures of organizations (Teo *et al.*, 2003), and the search for acceptance and legitimacy as the principal motivation for this alignment, which is associated with organizational isomorphism (Zucker, 1987). For Scott (2001), the need for legitimacy and the capacity to acquire more easily the resources necessary for survival are parallel motivations. One of the means employed most frequently by companies to achieve, maintain or increase their social acceptance or legitimacy is the adoption of practices respectful of the natural environment. Authors such as Gadenne and Zaman (2002) view legal compliance as the principal motivation for a company to implement environmental management practices and thus achieve legitimacy and avoid sanctions. Porter and Van de Linder (1995) state that it is the need to obtain competitive advantages that motivates companies to adopt practices of this type. Bansal and Roth (2000) and Xie and Haysase (2007) argue that attending to the demands of the various different interest groups is the factor that determines the implementation of environmental management systems. Lastly, in the study of Dias-Sardinha and Reijnders (2001), it is found that the improvement of the public image of the company is the path chosen to increase its social legitimacy, and that this latter goal is the principal factor that motivates practices of this type. As can be checked, the need for social legitimacy is a common thread in the various propositions on this topic in the scientific literature. In this line, Banasal and Roth (2000) design a model of corporate environmental responsibility in which the company's environmental initiatives are motivated both by the competition of the sector and by the need to improve the social legitimacy of the company.

The tourism sector has not been excluded from this process, particularly since tourism companies operate in a highly globalized context and with strong international competition. Given this dynamism, studies such as those of Huybers and Bennett (2002, 2003) stress the importance of environmental factors in the management of companies competing in the tourism sector. It could be stated that this importance was established definitively at the scientific level at the end of the 1990's, when the concept of sustainable tourism was institutionalized (Hunter, 1997; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Hurbyes and Bennett, 2003; Blanco *et al.*, 2009). This theoretical framework has given rise to studies demonstrating that the investment in responsible policies for protection of the natural environment have a positive effect both for the tourism companies and for the destinations in general (Candella

and Cellini, 2006; González, León and Padrón, 2006, and Pintassilgo and Albino, 2007). Claver *et al*., (2007) state that this positively affects not only the financial results and business performance financial of the company but also the competitiveness of the destination.

Based on the foregoing arguments, we can propose the following research hypotheses that will be tested in the empirical analysis presented next.

H2a: The implementation of environmental practices is motivated principally by the search for social legitimacy, more than by the increase of business performance or returns.

H3a: The implementation of responsible environmental management practices has a positive influence on business performance.

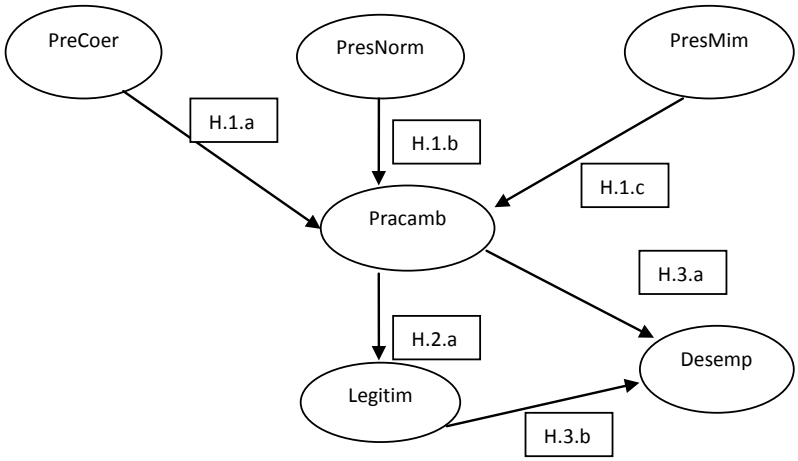
H3b: A positive direct relationship exists between the social legitimacy sought and business performance or results.

3. RESEARCH MODEL

The research model proposed is based on the configuration of the institutional context of the golf courses of Andalusia. The different systems that we have described previously translate to the three institutional mechanisms (normative, coercive and mimetic) that will exert pressure on the environmental practices of the golf courses of Andalusia. In studies of the institutional context of the golf courses of Andalusia by Riquel (2011) and Vargas and Riquel (2013), the normative pressures are found to have less influence in the adoption of practices described as environmentally responsible. This is because, in spite of golf tourism becoming one of the principal tourist products, with the considerable increase in numbers of golf courses in this region, this has taken place in a relatively short period of time. The effect of this is that there has not been sufficient time for the sector to acquire the necessary professionalization and collaborative operating network that would propitiate the diffusion and consolidation of these normative mechanisms.

With this study we reproduce possible future scenarios once there has been sufficient time for the normative pressures to gain weight in the context of the environmental management of the golf courses of Andalusia, as described in the part dealing with the analysis of data. The following figure represents the proposed research model on which we base the testing of our hypotheses.

Figure 1: Graphic representation of the model



Source: Own elaboration.

Legend: PresNorm = Normative Pressure; PresCor = Coercive pressure; PresMim = Mimetic Pressure; Pracamb = Implementation of environmental practices; Desemp = Organisational performance/returns; Legitim = Social legitimacy.

4. METHODOLOGY

The instrument used to obtain the data was a structured questionnaire addressed to the managers of the golf courses in the Region of Andalusia; these persons, assisted by their green-keepers usually, were selected as prospective respondents since they are likely to have more direct information on the topic under study.

A first version of the questionnaire was tested by several faculties with experience in this type of research, and by selected managers of golf courses. Our objective was to ensure the validity of content of the instrument of measurement. Once the pilot questionnaire had been sent, and after waiting one week, we interviewed these initial recipients to analyse their suggestions, which were incorporated in the definitive questionnaire. Having thus validated the questionnaire, we were then ready to apply it to the population being studied, that is, to the population consisting of the 96 golf courses in Andalusia that were in active operation during the year 2009. In continuation we present the principal characteristics of the sample.

Table 2: Technical specifications of the sampling

Research field	Golf courses.
Geographic location	Andalusia, Spain.
Methodology	Structured questionnaire.
Universe	96 golf courses in the Region
Size of the sample	Sample = universe, 96 golf courses
Valid responses	31
Sampling error	7.42 %
Level of confidence	95 percent, p = q = 0.5; Z=1.96
Period of data collection	Pretest: September 2008. First mailing: December 2008. First re-mailing: January 2009. Second re-mailing: February 2009. Treatment of data: February and March 2009.

Source: authors' own compilation.

We accepted a level of confidence of 95%; with this, the sampling error obtained with the final sample was 7.42 %, with p = q = 0.5. A total of 34 completed questionnaires were received but 3 of these were not completed correctly and had to be discarded. Thus the total of valid responses was 31, representing a response rate of 32.29% of the population. The scale utilised to measure the key factors of the research model is a Likert scale of five points, and for the results three types of measurement scale have been used. The first refers to the institutional context of the 96 golf courses in Andalusia, and the three pressure mechanisms proposed under the Institutional Theory have been measured. This type of measurement has been used before, in the studies of Kostova and Roth (1991) and Llamas (2005). The second type is the implementation of environmental practices; for this we have based our scale on the indicators designed for this purpose in organisations of this type by Romero (2005). Lastly, we have used the scale proposed by Powell and Dent-Micallef (1997) to measure the organisational performance, using the respondents' perceptions of their own organisation's performance in comparison with its competitors. The measurement of social legitimacy has been made based on Deephouse (1996). In relation to the type of indicator selected, in all cases they have been of the reflective type. The scales were reviewed using factorial analysis, with the object of determining their uni-dimensionality.

Table 3: Latent variables of the model and indicators

HYPOTHESES	CONSTRUCTS	INDICATORS	ABBREVIATION OF INDICATORS
H.2.a	Legitimacy (Legitim)	Social recognition.	Recosoci
		Organizational values.	Valorg
		Legitimacy, conferred by government.	Admolegi
		Legitimacy, conferred by employees.	Emplegi
		Legitimacy, conferred by general public.	Ciulegi
		Legitimacy, conferred by communications media.	Maslegi
		Legitimacy, conferred by customers.	Clielegi
		Legitimacy, conferred by suppliers.	Provlegi
		Legitimacy, conferred by ecology pressure groups.	Asoclegi
		Legitimacy, conferred by professional associations.	Proflegi
		Legitimacy, conferred by business sector.	Sectlegi
		Relationships with pressure groups.	Relagrup
H.1.a	Coercive pressure (Prescor)	Knowledge of laws.	Conoley
		Compliance with laws.	Cumpley
		Regulatory authorities.	Orgregul
		Existence of agreements.	Exacuerd
H.1.b	Normative pressure (Presnor)	Moral obligation.	Obligmor
		Congruence with values of the context.	Congrval
		Social norms.	Normsoci
H.1.c	Mimetic pressure (Presmim)	Knowledge of other companies' experiences.	Conoexp
		Models to follow.	Modelseg
		Imitation of other companies' practices.	Imiprac
		Knowledge of successful experiences.	Conoexit
H.3.a H.3.b	Environmental management practices (Pracamb)	Number of environmental proposals.	Numprop
		Proposals put into practice.	Propract
		Proposals that achieve their objectives.	Probjet
		Cost of environmental actions	Costemed
		Number of court cases for environmental matters.	Expedmed
		Employees in environmental training activities.	Emplefor
		Hours of environmental training activities.	Horafor
		Suppliers with environmental certification.	Provcert
		Purchases from suppliers with environmental certification.	Compcert
		Expenditure on publicizing environmental achievements.	Diflogro
		Expenditure on campaigns to increase awareness.	Campconc
	Business performance/ returns (Desemp)	Economic conditions 2007.	Condeco
		Financial result 2007.	Rtdoeco
		Profitability 2007.	Rentbil
		Number of Green Fees 2007.	Numgren
		Market share 2007.	Cuotame
		Economic conditions 2003-2007.	Condec03
		Financial result 2003-2007.	Rtdoec03
		Profitability 2003-2007.	Rentb03
		Number of Green Fees 2003-2007.	Num03
		Market share 2003-2007.	Cuota03

Source: authors' own compilation

5. RESULTS

For the analysis of the data and the experimentation that we wished to conduct, we use the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique. This technique can be considered appropriate in our case, for two main reasons. First, as a result of the procedure of segmentation of complex models, the PLS approach can work with small sample sizes (Barclay et al., 1992), as in our case where we have a sample of only 31 observations. Second, according to Selling (1995), the use of PLS should be considered in studies of the exploratory type.

5.1. Starting Situation

5.1.1. Measurement models

In this step we determine whether the theoretical concepts are measured correctly by the variables observed; for this their validity and reliability are studied. In a PLS model the individual reliability of the item, the internal consistency and the convergent and discriminant validity are analysed (Chin, 1998). The individual reliability per item for constructs with reflective indicators is assessed by examining the loadings with the PLS model. The value of the standardised loadings must be equal to or greater than 0.505, according to Falker and Miller (1992). The reliability of a construct allows us to check the internal consistency of all the indicators when measuring the concept; in other words, an evaluation is made of how rigorously the manifest variables are measuring the same latent variable. For this we follow Nunnally (1978), who suggests a reliability level of at least 0.8, although in early stages of the research 0.7 or greater is acceptable. The convergent validity is analysed by the average variance extracted (AVE), which gives the amount of variance that a construct obtains from its indicators in relation to the amount of variance due to the measurement error. For this, Fornell and Lacker (1981) recommend values higher than 0.5.

Table 4: Evaluation of the measurement models

CONSTRUCT	ITEM LOADINGS	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY	AVE
PRESNORM		0.802031	0.579547
Obligmor	0.611600		
Congrval	0.865600		
Normsoci	0.785200		
PRESCOR		0.697582	0.537966
Conoley	0.658700		
Orgregul	0.801300		
PRESMIM		0.744143	0.593380
Imipac	0.723500		
Conoexit	0.814400		
PRACAMB		0.915181	0.576204
Numgrup	0.777300		
Porpact	0.826600		
Costemed	0.678800		
Emplefor	0.834400		
Horafor	0.757200		
Provecert	0.775300		
Compcert	0.778700		
Diflogro	0.620000		
LEGITIMI		0.885277	0.609760
Recosoci	0.836900		
Valorg	0.843300		
Clielegi	0.740200		
Asoclegi	0.621100		
Realgurp	0.838800		

DESEMP		0.867587	0.505700
Rtdeco	0.709700		
Rentabil	0.674300		
Numeren	0.820400		
Cuotamer	0.683500		
Rentb03	0.703600		
Num03	0.669600		
Cuota03	0.596900		

Source: authors' own compilation.

To evaluate the discriminant validity we check whether the average variance extracted (AVE) of the construct is greater than the square of the correlations between that construct and the rest that make up the research model (Fornell and Lacker, 1981), which tells us that one construct is different from any other. To make the calculation procedure more practical, we carry out the inverse procedure.

Table 5: Discriminant validity

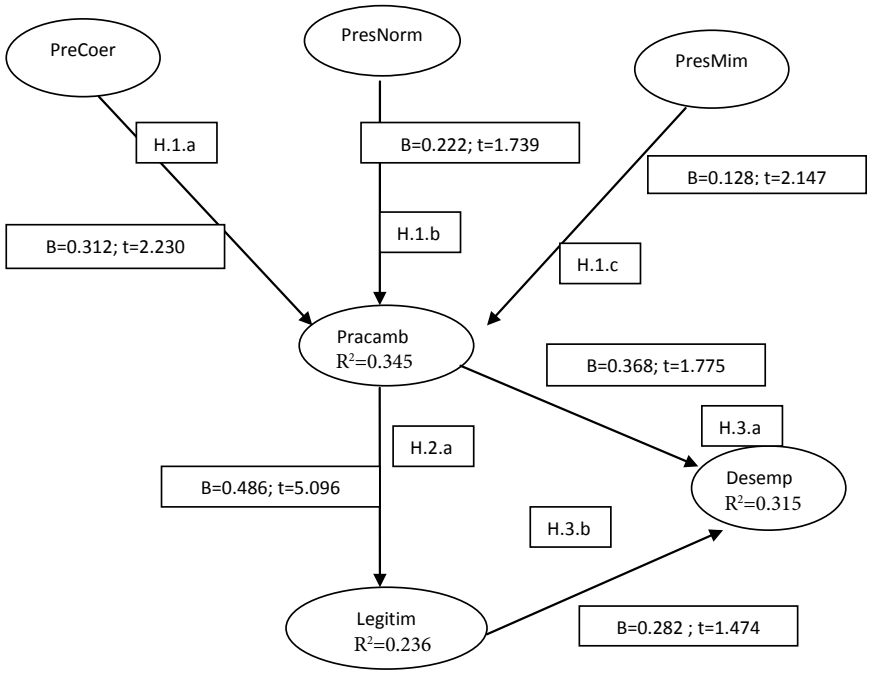
Constructs	PresCoer	PresNorm	PresMim	Pracamb	Legtimi	Desemp
PresCoer	*0.733*					
PresNorm	-0.382	*0.761*				
PresMim	-0.097	0.357	*0.770*			
Pracamb	-0.425	0.444	0.397	*0.759*		
Legtimi	-0.312	0.633	0.411	0.486	*0.780*	
Desemp	-0.464	0.207	0.135	0.505	0.461	*0.711*

Source: authors' own compilation.

5.1.2. Structural model

The path coefficients between the different constructs are reflected in figure 2, which tells us, as already commented, the strength of the relationships established between them:

Figure 2: Path coefficients of the model of research



As can be observed, all the path coefficients meet the condition proposed by Chin (1998), being higher than 0.2. In addition, the predictive power of the model that we have put forward can be analysed utilising the value of the variance explained (R2) for the dependent latent variables (Falk and Miller 1992; Chin, 1998; Leal and Roldán, 2001). Falk and Miller (1992) stipulate values that are equal to or larger than 0.1 as adequate for the variance explained, as in this model occurs.

5.2. Simulations

We share the opinion of Fatás and Roig (2004) that theory always organizes our knowledge and helps us to predict behaviour in new situations. However, in the traditional approach to economic research, as these authors argue, the observation of phenomena that occur naturally has been the only source of data available for stimulating the revision of existing theories. If the data relevant to an economic proposition were not directly observable in a natural economic setting, then the proposition would simply be left without the benefits of empirical testing. In recent years, however, experimental methods have given economists access to new sources of data, and have enlarged the set of economic propositions for which relevant data can be consulted (Fatás and Roig; 2004). In line with the above, we have carried out a simulation in the mechanisms of normative pressure, since these are the mechanisms of least impact in the original model, and based on the reasonable expectation that they will increase their institutional pressure in the near future. This simulation has consisted in altering the values of the indicators 10.5, 10.6 and 10.7, in two different scenarios: one of slight increase in normative pressure, reflected by the alteration by one positive point of those indicator values that were less than 5; and the other of a stronger increase in pressure, reflected by the alteration by two positive points of those indicator values that were less than 5.

We believe that, in addition to a legislative environment favourable to environmental responsibility, and with the existence of competitors that have already taken initiatives in this respect and are likely to be admired by the other golf courses as successful, it is necessary to study whether the golf courses of Andalusia perceive the implementation of sustainable environmental practices as an essential value shared with other members of the particular social context in which they are embedded. What we have to analyse is whether the golf courses perceive that society expects of them a certain line of proactive behaviour with respect to the natural environment, and whether society is holding them responsible for protecting that environment. A favourable normative context would lead companies to foster and adopt such measures, since these practices would be consistent with the standards, values and beliefs of society (Kostova and Roth, 2002).

Associated with professionalization, normative pressure is related to the normative pillar of Institutional Theory (Scott, 1995), which establishes social obligations that determine the behaviours expected of organisations. The importance is emphasized of the norms and standards that make up reality and the frameworks through which meanings are constructed. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) stress the importance of formal education, specialisation in university activities, and the establishment and growth of networks of professionals. The managers of organisations pay close attention to the institutionalised norms, standards and solutions relevant to their areas of business and their professional circles. In practice these patterns of behaviour are spread throughout activity sectors by key institutions that provide a forum for the exchange of information, establish standards, provide training and evaluate the success of practices in professional journals (Teo *et al.*, 2003).

In the context of Spain, and more specifically in Andalusia, the importance of professional associations is different from that in North America, for example. However, it is true that in the last decade in the organizational field of the golf sub-sector, the existence of institutions

of this type is being encouraged, whether of sectorial coverage or in training aspects. Institutional connections thus become a vehicle for spreading modes of management and/or novel measures in the environmental field. For these reasons it has been thought appropriate to introduce this simulation in our research model, with the object of capturing this natural tendency for the practices defined as normative to expand (by means of two scenarios, one of slight increases in the Likert scale scores of the normative indicators represented in table III, and another of bigger increases). In support of this experimental approach, it is noted that authors such as Garrod (1997), McGee (1998), Freeman *et al*. (2000) and Buysse and Verbeke (2003) consider that it is necessary to broaden the company's traditionally accepted strategic objective of creating value for the shareholders; they propose that the company accepts good environmental management as a corporate objective in response to the expectations and environmental pressures demonstrated by a variety of pressure groups very much broader than those represented by the shareholders, because the environmental impact of the company's operations is recognized as a key factor for the company's survival (Welford and Gouldson, 1993; Shrivastava, 1995; Stead and Stead, 1996; Fineman and Clarke, 1996; Rodríguez and Ricart, 1997; Berry and Rondinelli, 1998; and Henriques and Sadorsky, 1996).

5.2.1. Evaluation of the experimental measurement models

In continuation, an analysis is given (table 6) of the principal statistics after submitting our initial research model to the simulations in the normative pressures previously commented.

Table 6: Models of measurement with experimental simulation

Constructs	CURRENT SITUATION		SCENARIO OF A 'MODEST' INCREASE		SCENARIO OF A 'STRONG' INCREASE	
	Composite reliability	AVE	Composite reliability	AVE	Composite reliability	AVE
PresNorm	0.802031	0.579547	0.766511	0.624169	0.743115	0.657499
PresCoer	0.697582	0.537966	0.697582	0.537946	0.697639	0.537948
PresMim	0.744143	0.593380	0.744168	0.593405	0.744168	0.593416
Pracamb	0.915181	0.576204	0.915113	0.575941	0.915133	0.575959
Legitimi	0.885277	0.609760	0.872289	0.540332	0.872260	0.540302
Desemp	0.867587	0.505700	0.867450	0.485313	0.867423	0.485248

Source: authors' own compilation.

As can be observed there are gains in convergent validity, although the simulated models tell us that the indicators submitted to the simulation lose internal consistency, since the composite reliability is slightly lower in the simulated scenarios. In relation to the discriminant validity, it has been observed that each indicator of the constructs continues to be more closely related to its own construct than with the rest of the constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that both simulated models improve the discriminant validity, compared with the initial model proposed.

Table 7: Discriminant validity compared

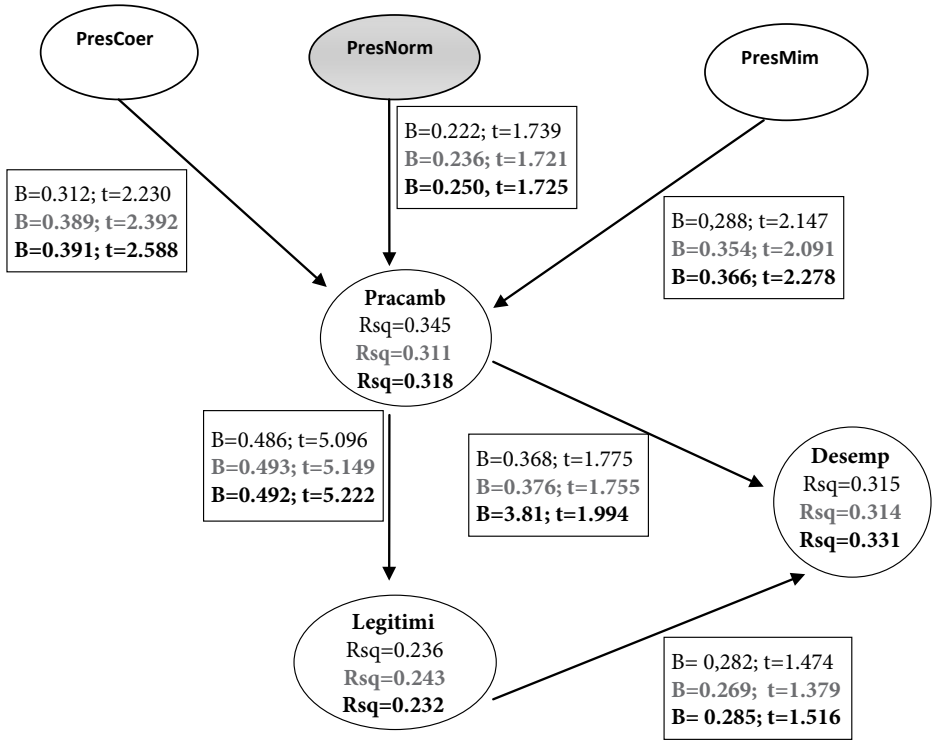
Constructs	SCENARIO OF A 'MODEST' INCREASE	SCENARIO OF A 'STRONG' INCREASE
PresNorm (squared root of AVE's	0.790	0.810
Correlations with PresNorm		
PresCoer	0.436	0.120
PresMim	0.336	0.279
Pracamb	0.375	0.160
Legitimi	0.516	0.127
Desemp	0.169	0.160

Source: authors' own compilation.

5.2.2. Evaluation of the structural models simulated

In the following figure (3) a comparison can be observed of how our research model evolves when submitted to the two simulated scenarios for the mechanisms of normative pressure. As can be observed, all the path coefficients meet the condition proposed by Chin (1998), being higher than 0.2. In addition, the predictive power of the model that we have put forward can be analysed utilising the value of the variance explained (R^2) for the dependent latent variables (Falk and Miller 1992; Chin, 1998; Leal and Roldán, 2001). Falk and Miller (1992) stipulate values that are equal to or larger than 0.1 as adequate for the variance explained, as in this model occurs. The following table (8) gives the strength and the results of testing the hypotheses put forward in the scenarios that we have been contemplating:

Figure 3: Structural models with experimental simulation in the normative pressures



Source: authors' own elaboration.

Research model proposed.
Model with slight increase in normative pressures.
Model with stronger increase in normative pressures.

Table 8: Testing and strength of the hypotheses

Hypotheses	Relationship between constructs	β Coefficients	Student-T test (bootstrap)	Level of significance and testing
H.1.a	PresCoer->Pracamb	0.312 0.389 **0.391**	2.230** 2.392** **2.588****	**Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.05 in all the scenarios.**
H.1.b	PresNorm->Pracamb	0.222 0.236 **0.250**	1.739* 1.721* **1.726***	Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.1, rejected for more demanding levels of significance.
H.1.c	PresMim->Pracamb	0.288 0.354 **0.366**	2.147** 2.091** **2.278****	**Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.05 in all the scenarios.**
H.2.a	Pracamb->Legtimi	0.486 0.493 **0.492**	5.096*** 5.149*** **5.222*****	**Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.001 in all the scenarios.**
H.3	Pracamb->Desemp	0.368 0.376 **0.381**	1.776* 1.755* **1.994****	**Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.05, in the scenario of stronger increase.**
H.4.a	Legtimi->Desemp	0.282 0.269 **0.285**	1.474* 1.379* **1.516***	Accepted for a level of significance of P<0.1, rejected for more demanding levels of significance, in all the scenarios.

Levels of significance: *P<0.1; **P<0.05; ***P<0.001 (based on t(499) of two tails). Own elaboration.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The topic of this study is the business context in respect of environmental protection in which the golf courses of Andalusia operate. This is a business activity that is intimately linked to tourism, the principal source of income generation in this autonomous region. Although the Institutional Theory has been employed by several authors in the scientific literature to explain the reasons for the behaviour of companies in respect of the natural environment (Hoffman and Ventresca, 2002; Campbell, 2007; Melville, 2010), there are few studies on companies that serve the tourism sector. In this line we can conclude that the institutional environment in respect of environmental protection in which the golf courses of Andalusia operate, conditions and influences how they pursue environmentally responsible practices. This conclusion is based on the non-rejection of hypotheses H1a, H1c, H2a and H3a that we put forward in our research model, both for the starting situation that corresponds to the real situation now, and for the two scenarios that we have presented for the potential future evolution of the normative context.

We observe that the hypothesis referring to the normative pressures (H1b) is rejected in the starting situation; this makes it interesting to study the evolution in future scenarios in which the scores of the items that constitute the "normative pressures" construct are strengthened.

The coercive pressures are the mechanisms that show the greatest capacity to influence the behaviour of these organizations in environmental matters. For the golf courses of Andalusia, therefore, knowledge of and compliance with the applicable legal regulations represent key elements for maintaining and improving their social acceptance or legitimacy. These propositions are in line with studies such as those of Buysse and Verbeke (2003), Antón *et al*. (2004), and Telle and Larsson, (2007).

The protagonism of pressures of this type is maintained in the scenarios that we have put forward in which we strengthen the values of the normative pressures. As we understand

it, this is because in recent years the Regional Government (Junta de Andalucía) has made notable efforts to develop a comprehensive regulatory framework aimed at ensuring the environmental sustainability of the region as a tourist destination. In fact, it is a topic of complaint that the wide-ranging environmental legislation to which the region's golf courses are subject requires them to devote equally great efforts to keep up-to-date with respect to all the legal dispositions that are applicable to them.

In relation to the normative pressures, we have made an analytical simulation of their possible future evolution, as described in the analysis of data of the present paper. It is fairly unusual to find studies that experiment with institutional contexts and simulate different scenarios for the evolution of pressures. From this simulation, which affects hypothesis H1b, we can conclude that, when the construct of the normative pressures is submitted to moderate and strong variations of the items that comprise it, the model does not vary substantially: the coercive pressures continue to be the factor that has the most influence on the behaviour in respect of conserving the natural environment. We believe that the large number of legal standards for environmental protection that affect golf course operators studied counteracts the effect of the normative mechanisms, because these environmental standards also have a formal component that can be linked with certain legal obligations. This result leads us to conclude that, in the medium term, the mechanisms of normative pressure in the sector of the golf courses of Andalusia will not be one of the principal motivations that drive sustainable practices by organizations of this type. These conclusions differ from those presented in the studies of Palmer *et al*., 1993; Henriques and Sardosky, 1996; King and Lenox, 2001; Florida and Davison, 2001; and Raines, 2002, on the capacity of this type of mechanism to influence the environmental behaviour of companies, although in different sectors and from a non-dynamic perspective.

It is believed, therefore, that the normative pressures in this organizational field are still in the phase of diffusion and are not yet fully established in the sector. In fact, our model reveals that the impact of the normative pressures on the implementation of environmental practices is not statistically significant. This is despite the finding that the adoption of a policy of social responsibility in respect of environmental protection brings with it an improvement of social legitimacy, if we consider the institutional environment as a whole. This finding is reflected in the acceptance of the corresponding hypothesis (H2a) in all the scenarios (real and simulated). We therefore find ourselves aligned with the propositions put forward in the studies of Scott (2001) and Strong *et al*. (2001).

The testing of hypothesis H3a requires special attention. It seems clear that, as the normative pressures for environmental protection gain weight in the institutional context of an organizational field with strong legal regulations, the positive relationship argued by many authors (Williams et al., 1993; Worrell *et al*., 1995; Cordeiro and Sarkis, 1997; Claver and Molina, 2000; Del Brio and Junquera, 2001; Peris and Marquina, 2002; Aragón and Sharma, 2003; Al-Tuwaijin, 2004; Ann *et al*., 2006; Garcés et al., 2006; García and Armas, 2007; and Piñero *et al*., 2009) between environmental responsibility and organizational performance is reinforced.

With respect to the last hypothesis put forward in our research model (H4a), it is shown that golf courses do not believe that better levels of social legitimacy lead to better levels of organisational performance; because of this finding, we can add weight to the propositions that, for organisations of this type, a better way to gain social acceptance and improve their performance is to comply with the ruling environmental legislation.

The present study is not free of limitations. The size of the sample, in both geographic and sectorial scope, together with the possibility that respondents introduced subjective views in the information provided, limit the possible generalizations that might be obtained from the conclusions. Thus, the application of other more confirmatory techniques would

be justified and would be advisable. We consider this last limitation as a possible line for future research, complemented by the use of a larger sample.

6.1. Implications for the Tourism Management of Golf Courses

In recent years, government at the national, regional and local levels has made a determined effort to transmit an image of environmental sustainability for Spain's tourist destinations, which has meant that there has been government intervention on environmental matters by way of legislation. As a result every company associated with the tourism sector is obliged to be aware of and understand in detail a wide range of laws and standards issued by the government at all levels. This obligation is even more pressing for the companies that operate golf courses, given the negative connotations that arise from the construction of these facilities. This obligation inevitably involves the need to comply with these regulations so as to avoid possible sanctions and not suffer competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis the rest of the sector. To sum up, in today's business climate, the best way for golf course operators to maintain and increase their levels of social acceptance and legitimacy is still by complying with the law on environmental matters, even more than the implementation of voluntary standards and norms.

In this regard, mimesis (i.e. imitation of other operators' practices) has been also shown to be an effective means for reducing the uncertainties associated with any environmental innovation. In addition, as operators gain more experience of collaborating with others under the auspices of professional associations of the golf sector linked with the tourism sector, the standards and regulations in respect of measures required for environmental protection will become consolidated as recommended and accepted "best practices".

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